

Dear Members of the Commerce Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

This letter is in support of HB 5403 which requests funding for the expansion of the Connecticut Invention Convention, (CIC) an education non profit whose mission Cantor Colburn has supported for 4 years and continues to see value in what the CIC contributes to Connecticut's future.

As a founding partner of Cantor Colburn, LLP, and in my position as the Chairman of Connecticut Innovations, Inc., I firmly believe that "innovation" is at the heart of our state, national and global competitiveness now and in the future. I support the mission and goals of the CIC because I agree that teaching innovation skills to our young people, early in their education while they are still open to the excitement and promise of careers in science, technology, engineering and math, is not only possible but critical to their lives, our futures, and the ability of our state and nation to compete successfully on the global stage. My partners and I have witnessed the effect that CIC's programs have on young creative minds and the indelible experience that CIC has to offer Connecticut's children. Moreover, the CIC's efforts to bring in underserved populations, such as women and minorities, is to be applauded and expanded.

Now CIC is poised to expand even further, most recently with a small grant from the CTNext.com program, administered by Connecticut Innovations, to provide resources for the inventors in the "Next Step Inventors" program who are ready to take their products to market. However, additional funding is needed to continue CIC's unprecedented 34% growth into yet more schools, serving more children with programs that span the continuum of K-12.

Please give HB 5403 your consideration and support for the request for expansion of CIC's programs and operations.

Sincerely,

Michael Cantor